

## On the process of Paul's independence in *Sons and Lovers* (2)

### —『息子と恋人』におけるポールの自立の過程について (2)—

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In the first two parts of this essay, I have followed the process of Paul's independence partly by focusing my attention on his resistance to his mother's influence, his own virginity and Miriam's spiritual love for him, partly by stressing the importance of his recognition of the "flame of life" and "God" in his flesh.

In the course of my disussion, however, I have not explained in detail what Paul means by "flame of life" and "God", so in the third part of this essay I will explain the importance of what these two phrases mean to him. In addition, I think that I cannot ignore the significant role his relationship with a married couple, Mr and Mrs Dawes, takes in the formation of his independence: in the fourth part of this essay I will consider the significance of his experience of the 'flame of life' with Mrs Dawes (Clara) and of his experience of a peculiar feeling of intimacy with Mr Dawes (Baxter).

Before proceeding to the explanation of the meaning of "flame of life" and Paul's own idea of "God", I must make the meaning of the word "independence" clear, because I may put some readers of this essay into doubt about what I mean by "independence" without defining the word more accurately. According to an American psychologist M., Mahler the concept of independence consists of two concepts, "individualization" and "separation". In her definition of them, "individualization" means an ability to take care of oneself in one's everyday life and "separation" means an ability to recognize the fact that one and one's parents are different persons from each other in a true sense. If I follow her definitions, I think that "individualization" can include the two important aspects of economic independence and psychological independence, and that "separation" means mainly a true and deep psychological independence from one's parents.

If I am allowed to use Mahler's definition of these two concepts, it may be said that I have mainly followed the process of Paul's "individualization" in the preceding two parts of this essay, because Paul's separation from his mother never occurs in a true sense until at the last paragraph of this work. For this reason, I will also mainly deal with the process of Paul's "individualization" in the following two parts of this essay. But my main concern is about his true "separation" from his mother at the end of the novel, so I will follow the process of his "individualization" by concentrating on his steps toward his true "separation" from his mother.

## III

In order to elucidate what Paul means by his idea of "God" and "flame of life", I must give an account of how Paul's nature is described in the novel. This will help us to understand why Paul seeks these two principles of ideas in the process of his "individualization"

When Mrs Morel goes out with Annie and the baby Paul in the cricket ground one evening, she thinks the baby will be a Joseph, watching the red sunset against the hills of Derbyshire.

Mrs Morel watched the sun sink from the glistening sky, leaving a soft flower-blue overhead, while the western space went red, as if all the fire had swum down there, leaving the bell cast flawless blue. The mountain-ash berries across the field stood fierily out from the dark leaves, for a moment. A few shocks of corn in corner of the fallow stood up as if alive; she imagined them bowing; perhaps her son would be a Joseph.<sup>1</sup>

Joseph is the eleventh son born between Jacob and Rachel. According to Vries's Dictionary of Symbol and Imagery,<sup>2</sup> Joseph has as his various attributes those of the sun; warmth like that of blood, traveller, healer, man who gives up his woman and man who suddenly attains the highest bliss. Paul is described as a lively person having these attributes throughout the novel. I will give some examples of descriptions of these attributes as follows.

One day Paul returned home from school, feeling ill. He was "a delicate boy, subject to bronchitis". While he was taking a rest after dinner, he fell asleep. But he is described as a lively child.

She listened to the small, restless noise the boy made in his throat as she worked. Again rose in her heart the old, almost weary feeling towards him. She had never expected him to live. And yet he had a great vitality in his young body.<sup>3</sup>

When Paul is fourteen and looking for his job, he is described as a mobile and warm child.

His face had already lost its youthful chubbiness, and was becoming somewhat like William's—rough-featured, almost rugged—and it was extraordinarily mobile. Usually he looked as if he saw things, was full of life, and warm; then his smile, like his mother's came suddenly and was very lovable; and then, when there was any clog in his soul's quick running, his face went stupid and ugly. He was the sort of boy that becomes a clown and a lout as soon as he is not understood, or feels himself held cheap; and again, is adorable at the first touch of warmth.<sup>4</sup>

When Paul meets Miriam at her farm house and tries the swing in one of the cowshed, he is also described as a quick and lively child.

He set off with a spring, and in a moment was flying through the air, almost out of door, the upper half of which was open, ...He looked down at her, and she saw his blue eyes sparkling. He was swinging through the air, every bit of him swinging, like a bird that swoops for joy of movement.... He swing negligently. She could feel him falling and lifting through the air, as if he were lying on some force.<sup>5</sup>

One Saturday afternoon, Paul cycled to Miriam's house. When he got to her house and got off his bicycle, he pushed his bicycle into the yard. At this scene he is pictured as a lively person who has a vivid influence upon his bicycle.

He walked in a nonchalant fashion, and his bicycle went with him as if it were a live thing.... Miriam was startled. She heard him putting his bicycle in the stable underneath, and talking

to jimmy, who had been a pit-horse, and who was seedy.<sup>6</sup>

Besides the picture of Paul's lively nature, he is also described here as one who has the ability to communicate with animals. This ability of his is, I think, closely connected with his capacity to feel inanimate things, like pits and trucks, as animate, which I have already pointed out in the preceding second part of this essay. Whether things are animate or inanimate, he values most the living state of things and his active communication with them; his philosophy of his life and art is produced from his positive evaluation of these two. In the following two examples, we can see both his philosophy of art and his active communicative power reflected in the use of the word 'protoplasm'.

When Paul brings up his sketch-book to Miriam, she ponders long over his last picture and asks him a question.

"Why do I like this so?"..."Why do you?" he asked. "I don't know. It seems so true." "It's because – it's because there is scarcely any shadow in it; it's more shimmery, as if I'd painted the shimmering protoplasm in the leaves and everywhere, and not the stiffness of the shape. That seems dead to me. Only this shimmering is the real living. The shape is a dead crust. The shimmer is inside really."<sup>7</sup>

One day in March Paul lies on the bank of Nethermere, with Miriam sitting beside him.

He was discussing Michael Angelo. It felt to her as if she were fingering the very quivering tissue, the very protoplasm of life, as she heard him.<sup>8</sup>

In each of these two paragraphs we can see his animistic appreciation of things and his lively nature respectively.

One evening when Paul and Miriam return from 'the great sweeping shore of sand towards Theddlthorpe', he experiences an intense agony in his body. Here Paul is described as a youth who has a flame of life in his body.

The country was black and still. From behind the sandhills came the whisper of the sea. Paul and Miriam walked in silence. Suddenly he started. The whole of his blood seemed to burst into flame, and he could scarcely breathe<sup>9</sup>.

In addition, there are many examples of sentences which include the words or phrases defining Paul's attributes of the same kind such as "moving", "quick", "flame", "full of life", "living", "fire of life" and so forth.

Judging from these kind of attributes given to Paul in the examples mentioned above, we can safely conclude that Lawrence describes Paul as a vivid youth who tries to reject any kind of bondage or restrictive control in his relation with others, who always searches for his free and independent relation with others, especially with women.

Now, we can return to the question about what "flame of life" and "God" mean to Paul whose lively nature is reflected in these attributes.

As is shown in the above examples, he grows to be a sensitive, warm and mobile young man full of life, though he sometimes feels unstable or uncertain of himself as if he were a leaf blown here and there.

When he is twenty years old, he and Miriam go away for a holiday to Mablethorpe with his family and some friends of his and his sisters's. When they are alone away from the others, he talks to her about his love of "horizontal", contrasting it with her "perpendicular" love.

...how they, the great levels of sky and land in Lincolnshire, meant to him the eternality of the

will, just as the bowed Norman arches of the church, repeating themselves, meant the dogged leaping forward of the persistent human soul, on and on, nobody knows where; in contradiction to the perpendicular lines and to the Gothic arch, which, he said, leapt up at heaven and touched the ecstasy and lost itself in the divine. Himself, he said, was Norman, Miriam was Gothic.<sup>10</sup>

In his idea of two different kinds of love, we can see that he not only begins to recognize his own nature to be different from hers but also starts to understand the importance of recovering his own lively nature which he has been forced to suppress mainly in his relation with her and partly in his relation with his mother.

Since the love between Paul and Miriam started "in this atmosphere of subtle intimacy, this meeting in their common feeling for something in nature", their love has tended toward a spiritual one, "the higher thing," because of Miriam's spiritual (or soulful) kind of love for him.

But his relation with Miriam begins to change from a stable relation to an unstable one because of the insistence of his physical desire. He begins to feel that Miriam makes him spiritual, and that he does not want to be spiritual. He feels that he is forced to despise himself or his physical desire because of her spiritual pressure on their love. He feels that he is not valued as a man who has physical desire, because she does not realize "the male he was". He seeks to have a relation with her in which he can want her "as a man wants a woman". Here in accusing her of being too spiritual in their love, Paul, I think, does not notice the true and deep reason why he charges her so strongly. As I have pointed out in the second part of this essay, his accusation of her is mainly derived from his mother's hatred for Miriam, which he closely identifies with. At this stage of his development he seems to be still in a symbiotic relationship with his mother psychologically. Nevertheless, his increasing sexual desire and his recognition of the importance of it as a life-force enable him to break gradually from his spiritual relation with Miriam.

At the age of twenty-one he has become wild and cruel toward her. He criticizes her "perpendicular" love and her belief in which "she lived and moved and had her being". He thinks that there is no room for his physical desire or his life-force to fulfill itself in his spiritual relation with her. He tries to be in an earthly and ordinary state of love in his relation with her. He tries to value and appreciate his physical desire as a flow of life which enables him to communicate with another person, especially a woman, not spiritually but passionately. He thinks that without physical and passionate communication with her his "horizontal" love for her is not complete, so he censures her religion and Christianity in general in which his desire has been ignored and their relation bounded in virginity. But here in his censuring her spirituality and her religion for the second time, he does not seem to notice what her true nature is. She is not entirely the girl what he thinks she is. As Mrs Clara feels and says to him, I think she loves and wants Paul in her own way. When he thinks she is not a girl who cannot want him, he does not consider her position as one of the fair and weaker sex in their provincial district. She is expected to keep her virginity before her marriage in keeping with the double-standard oriented society in this district. Even if she loves and wants him, she cannot help being afraid of her physical communication with him, thinking that her physical experience with him before marriage will disgrace her and make her position very difficult for her to continue her virtuous and independent life. Paul does not take these things into consideration at all. At any rate he "questions the orthodox creed" and goes "cruelly smashing her beliefs" to find an outlet for his

physical desire and integrates the desire into his life.<sup>12</sup> After he sports with Clara and other friends of his jumping over heaps of hay one evening, he returns to Miriam and criticizes her idea of religion and God, presenting his own new idea of religion and God.<sup>13</sup> In his new idea of religion and God he makes much of feeling and being instead of thinking and knowing. As Lawrence says in his letter to Ernest Collings dated 17 January, 1913, Paul believes in his blood or "flame of life" in his body.

My great religion is a belief in the blood, the flesh, as being wiser than the intellect. We can go wrong in our minds. But what our blood feels and believes and says, is always true. The intellect is only a bit and a bridle. What do I care about knowledge. All I want is to answer to my blood, direct, without fribbling intervention of mind, or moral, or what-not. I conceive a man's body as a kind of flame, like a candle flame, forever upright and yet flowing: and the intellect is just the light that is shed on to the things around.<sup>14</sup>

Also in his discussion about life with his mother, we can see that he has arrived at his own belief in life by rejecting his mother's idea of happiness.<sup>15</sup>

When his mother wishes he will "fall in love with one of the girls in a better station of life" to be happy, he says to her as follows,

"What is happiness!" he cried. "It's nothing to me! How am I to be happy?" ... "So long as life's full, it doesn't matter whether it's happy or not. ... "So long as you don't feel life's pauntry and a miserable business, the rest doesn't matter, happiness or unhappiness." She pressed him to her. "But I want you to be happy," she said pathetically. "Eh, my dear—say rather you want me to live."<sup>16</sup>

Paul's belief shown in this passage is one in "fullness of life"<sup>17</sup> which he seems to have found not only by his recognition of his lively nature but also by his artistic and idealistic appreciation of life, while his mother's belief is one in "happiness in a better station of life" of which she seems to have been convinced by experiencing the wretched state of her married life. His idealistic appreciation of the "fullness of life" waits for its incarnation by the satisfaction of his physical desire.

If we review these two cases in which Paul criticizes Miriam's view of love, religion and God and rejects his mother's view of happiness in life, we notice that he criticizes the two women by using the same theory of life. As we have seen, it is expressed in various phrases such as "horizontal love", "fullness of life", "flame of life" and so forth. What is common to these is Paul's will or desire to lose his virginity and have a vivid relationship with a woman. He seems to think that through this vivid relationship or act of communication with a woman his "flame of life" and "God" will appear. I think that by recognizing the importance of "flame of life" and "God" through the vivid relation with a woman, Paul begins to make a first step toward his own identity as a man as well as toward his independence from his mother. Lawrence tells us about his idea of the relation between his "God" and "woman" in the Foreword to *Sons and Lovers* addressed to Edward Garnet. I think that his view of the relation between "God" and "Woman" is reflected in Paul's view of "God" and "flame of life."

And the Father, the Inscrutable, the Unknowable, we know in the Flesh, in Woman. She is the door for our in-going and our outcoming. In her we go back to the Father: but like the witness of the Transfiguration, blind and unconscious.<sup>18</sup>

In the fourth part of this essay I will elucidate the important role which Paul's experiences with Mr and Mrs Dawes play in forming his "individuality".

At his age of twenty-four when he and Miriam are alone at her grandmother's cottage in Woodlinton, he finally loves her "to the last fibre of his being". But he cannot experience the "flame of life" with her which he has expected, and instead wants to cry. He feels a sense of failure and death because she lies to be sacrificed for him and so he has to sacrifice her. He cannot have a vivid relation or communication with Miriam.

Soon after breaking off with Miriam, he goes straight to Clara, a seemingly different type of woman from Miriam.

One day when he sees Miriam again, he tells her about "the fearful importance of marriage" and "the real, real flame of feeling through another person". When she compares the marriage of Mr and Mrs Morel with that of Mr and Mrs Dawes and points out the similarity between the two marriages in their marital breakdown, Paul answers as follows,

Yes; but my mother, I believe, got real joy and satisfaction out of my father at first. I believe she had a passion for him; that's why she stayed with him. After all, they were bound to each other. "... That's what one must have, I think," he continued — "the real, real, flame of feeling through another person" — once, only once, if it only lasts three months. See, my mother looks as if she'd had everything that was necessary for her living and developing. There's not a tiny bit of a feeling of sterility about her." "No," said Miriam. "And with my father, at first, I'm sure she had the real thing. She knows; she has been there. You can feel it about her, and about him, and about hundreds of people you meet every day; and, once it has happened to you, you can go on with anything and ripen." "What has happened, exactly?" asked Miriam. "It's so hard to say, but the something big and intense that changes you when you really come together with somebody else. It almost seems to fertilize your soul and make it that you can go on and mature." "And you think your mother had it with your father?" "Yes; and at the bottom she feels grateful to him for giving it her, even now though they are miles apart." "And you think Clara never had it?" "I'm sure."<sup>19</sup>

Paul emphasizes the importance of a "real flame of feeling through another person" for the maintenance of living human relations, which he couldn't have with Miriam, and he then expects it from Clara, who seems to be experienced in the world and different from "spiritual" Miriam.

At first it seems to him that Clara is a man hater, but gradually he understands that she disguises her unsatisfied and lonely feeling beneath her defiant attitude toward Paul. After several meetings, they have a mysterious physical experience by the canal one evening.

What was she? A strong, strange, wild life, that breathed with his in the darkness through this hour. It was all so much bigger than themselves that he was hushed. They had met, and included in their meeting the thrust of the manifold grass-stems, the cry of the peewit, the wheel of the stars. ... And after such an evening they both were very still, having known the immensity of passion. They felt small, half afraid, childish, and wondering, like Adam and Eve when they lost their innocence and realized the magnificence of the power which drove them out of Paradise and across the great night and the great day of humanity. It was for each of them an initiation and a satisfaction. To know their own nothingness, to know the tremendous living flood which carried them always, gave them rest within themselves. If so great a mag-

nificent power could overwhelm them, identify them altogether with itself, so that they know they were only grains in the tremendous heave that lifted every grass-blade its little height, and every tree, and living thing, then why fret about themselves? They could let themselves be carried by life, and they felt a sort of peace each in the other. There was a verification which they had had together. Nothing could nullify it, nothing could take it away; it was almost their belief in life.<sup>20</sup>

Through this passionate experience with Clara Paul gets the satisfaction which he has been seeking in vain in the relation with Miriam. For the first time in his life Paul's desire is blissfully shared by a woman in "the immensity of passion" or "the tremendous living flood". His new idea of religion and God is incarnated in his body through this magnificent power. Therefore Paul becomes convinced of his belief in "fullness of life" in "the verification which they had had together", and this mutual satisfaction is what Paul has emphasized as the most important experience in the relation between man and woman in his discussion about Clara's marriage with Miriam. If we can find in the formation of Paul's new idea of religion and God, his first stage of establishing his identity and individuality, we can see his second stage in his experience of "the real, real flame of feeling" through Clara, because Paul thinks that this experience is "the something big and intense that changes you when you really come together with somebody else and almost seems to fertilize your soul and make it that you can go on and mature."

But the mutual satisfaction between Paul and Clara doesn't hold long. Indeed Paul is satisfied with this impersonal flood experience of "the baptism of fire in passion", but Clara is not satisfied because she wants something more personal and permanent. She wants to get Paul himself (It is no wonder that she wants him after such a kind of experience with him, considering her social position as one of the fair and weaker sex), but it is not Clara but "something that happened because of her" that Paul wants. Just as I feel Paul is sometimes cruel toward Miriam, especially when he leaves her after loving her, so I feel Paul is again cruel toward Clara in this situation. At any rate, when she knows that his life doesn't belong to her and that her life doesn't belong to him either, they cannot help going their own ways respectively. Though they could be sure of themselves "each through the other" in the experience, "each wanted a mate to go side by side with". Soon after this experience Clara begins to compare Paul with her husband and feel a certain surety about her husband she has never felt with Paul. One evening when Paul and Clara are walking along Woodborough Road, they talk about the cruelty of men and women, and finally realize that their passionate experience was a failure. They know that "that evening had only made a little split between them".

Having experienced bitter relations with Miriam and Clara respectively, Paul blames the two women for the failure of these two relations. The causes for his blaming these two women are almost the same for him. He says that both Miriam and Clara try to get what they think he is, but that his true nature is not what they think it is, and that he feels as if his true self were ignored or despised by them.

Though we have already seen Paul complain of Miriam's "spiritual" way of loving in the earlier part of the book, we still see him blaming Miriam for the same reason even at the end of the novel.

But—you love me much, you want to put me in your pocket. And I should die there smothered.<sup>21</sup>

One evening when Paul and Clara talk about her marriage, he also says, "I consider you treated

Baxter rottenly" and criticizes her way of loving for the same reason he blames Miriam,

"I suppose you thought he was a lily of valley, and so you put him in an appropriate pot, and tended him according. You made up your mind he was a lily of the valley, and it was no good his being a cow-parsnip. You wouldn't have it." ... "You imagined him something he wasn't. That's just what a woman is. She thinks she knows what's good for a man, and she's going to see he gets it; and no matter if he's starving, he may sit and whistle for what he needs, while she's got him, and is giving him what's good for him."<sup>22</sup>

When I remember here Mrs Morel's "forcing her husband to face things" and Paul's criticism of his mother's view of life and happiness in discussion about life, I think that Paul criticizes the way of loving or the attitude toward life common to these three women who he thinks don't understand what their male partners really are.

At this stage of Paul's development he begins to sympathize with Baxter, Clara's husband, because he understands how Baxter suffers from his marital breakdown. Paul understands that though Baxter loves his wife he doesn't love her well enough for her to be satisfied. He knows that Baxter is a fool who doesn't know how to love his wife. This is the reason there is "that peculiar feeling of intimacy" between Paul and Baxter behind the violent hatred for each other.

I think that Paul's understanding of Baxter's sufferings is derived from the experience of his own failure to love Miriam as well as Clara,

If he were really with her, he had to put aside himself and desire. If he would have her, he had put her aside.<sup>23</sup>

I think that it is also derived from his intimate knowledge of the fierce battle between his parents and the consequent failure of their relation.

In addition, there is another important reason Paul and Baxter feel "an almost painful nearness" to each other. Paul broke off from Clara and learn his mother, "the only thing that held him up", is going to die soon. Just as Baxter has been suffering from the fear of losing his wife, so Paul is now suffering from the fear of losing his beloved mother. This similar situation enables these two men to understand the each other's sufferings.

One evening Paul is told by Dr Ansell that Baxter is in hospital in Sheffield and he asks after Baxter. After Paul returns to Nottingham, he tells Clara about it. She begins to repent having left her husband and goes to him to do penance.

In his relations with Mr and Mrs Dawes Paul has got not only "flame of life" through Clara but his negative view of the way of loving common to the three women. At the same time he understands that the sufferings of Baxter's are similar to those of his and his father's and plays an important role as healer in the recovery of Baxter and the self-assurance of Clara. After Paul unites Mr and Mrs Dawes, he returns to his dying mother and nurses her with his sister Annie. Now, he has experienced much in the world, especially in the world of love and marriage or the relation between men and women. He has grown enough to kill his mother mercily by making her take her night milk with all the morphia pills. Therefore, when he is bereaved of his beloved mother, he won't give in, though he wants to drift toward her, the world of death. Though I can't say clearly what he turns to "the faintly humming, glowing town" for, I think there is a suggestion of Paul's independence, that is, his formation of "individuality" and "separation" from his mother at the end of the novel.

I think there are three major stages in Paul's independence from his mother: the formation of



Paul's new religion and "God", his experience of "the real, real flame of feeling through another person" and finally his important role as the healer of Mr and Mrs Dawes.

Some critics point out that the author's outline of the novel disagrees with its ending, and that the novel doesn't have any objective correlative for Paul's independence in it. But if we read this novel carefully paying attention to Paul's attributes, his lively nature, and the three major stages mentioned above, I think we can find in the novel some clues to the way the novel ends and to his "separation" from his mother.

#### Notes

- 1 . Keith Sagar ed.: *D. H. Lawrence: Sons and Lovers* ( Penguin, 1984) p.73.
- 2 . A de Vries: *Dictionary of Symbol and Imagery*, trans. Keiichiro Yamashita ( Taishyukan Publishing Company, 1984) pp.368-9.
- 3 . Sagar: *op. cit.*, p.105.
- 4 . *Ibid.*: p.130.
- 5 . *Ibid.*: p.200.
- 6 . *Ibid.*: p.222.
- 7 . *Ibid.*: pp.201-2.
- 8 . *Ibid.*: p.247.
- 9 . *Ibid.*: p.229.
10. *Loc. cit.*
11. *Ibid.*: p.256.
12. *Ibid.*: p.245.
13. *Ibid.*: p.308.
14. Harry T. Moore, ed.: *The Collected Letters of D. H. Lawrence Vol. I* ( Heineman, 1970) p.180.
15. About Paul's insistence upon his mother recognizing him, see Sagar: *op. cit.* pp.230-1., p.234., p.255.
16. *Ibid.*: p.316.
17. About this belief of Paul's see Cyril Mer sham's belief in life in *A Modern Lover*.
18. E. W. Tedlock, Jr.,ed.: *D. H. Lawrence and Sons and Lovers: Sources and Criticism* ( New York University Press, 1965) pp.26.
19. Sagar: *op. cit.*, p.381.
20. *Ibid.*: p.421.
21. *Ibid.*: p.489.
22. *Ibid.*: p.428.
23. *Ibid.*: p.352.